

MAR 11 2022

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE BUREAU TO UPDATE A STUDY ON
THE FEASIBILITY OF UNDERGROUNDING THE STATE'S UTILITY
FACILITIES.

1 WHEREAS, undergrounding entails replacing overhead electric
2 and telecommunication cables and facilities with underground
3 cables and equipment; and

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5 WHEREAS, there is widespread community interest in
6 undergrounding the State's utility facilities to enhance scenic
7 views, address public health concerns, reduce the risk of wind
8 damage, and increase system reliability, among other benefits;
9 and

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11 WHEREAS, the advantages of undergrounding were illustrated
12 in 1992, when Hurricane Iniki downed more than five thousand
13 utility lines and poles on the island of Kauai, leaving more
14 than 14,350 homes without power; and

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16 WHEREAS, there are also disadvantages to undergrounding,
17 and all facets of the issue should be considered; and

18
19 WHEREAS, in 1999, the Legislative Reference Bureau studied
20 the feasibility of undergrounding the State's utility facilities
21 in a report entitled "Undergrounding Public Utility Lines"; and

22
23 WHEREAS, there are now new technologies related to both
24 undergrounding and overhead utility lines, making much of the
25 Bureau's report outdated; now, therefore,

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27 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-first
28 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2022, the
29 House of Representatives concurring, that the Legislative
30 Reference Bureau is requested to update the Bureau's 1999 report
31 on the feasibility of undergrounding the State's utility
32 facilities; and



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2 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Bureau is requested to:

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4 (1) Update and compile a list of the statewide issues and
5 considerations involved in undergrounding the State's
6 utility facilities, including: available
7 alternatives, legal issues, cost apportionment,
8 resource allocation, land use, public safety, civil
9 defense planning, public health, environmental
10 conditions, technological issues, impact on property
11 owners, impact on the tourist industry, aesthetic
12 impressions, and overall impact on quality of life;
13
14 (2) Discuss any relevant changes to federal, state, and
15 county policies, statutes, or ordinances governing the
16 placement of utility facilities that have occurred
17 since the 1999 report was published; and
18
19 (3) Update the Bureau's recommendations on factors that
20 the Legislature should consider in evaluating whether
21 to underground the State's existing and proposed
22 utility facilities, including: the conditions under
23 which undergrounding should be carried out,
24 recommendations for obtaining community feedback, and
25 alternative processes that could be used for
26 information gathering and decision making; and
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28 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Bureau may make
29 recommendations regarding:

- 30
31 (1) The advisability of establishing an interagency or
32 interdisciplinary planning group;
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34 (2) The feasibility of coordinating existing planning
35 resources for both short-term evaluation and long-term
36 implementation; and
37
38 (3) Methods and opportunities for soliciting input from
39 community members and community leaders, including
40 ratepayers, businesses, and members of the state and
41 county governments; and
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1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, in conducting the study, the
 2 Legislative Reference Bureau is requested to consult with
 3 appropriate government and private entities, including the
 4 Public Utilities Commission; State Departments of
 5 Transportation, Defense, and Economic Development and Tourism;
 6 State Division of Consumer Advocacy; Mayors of the Counties of
 7 Hawaii, Maui, Kauai, and the City and County of Honolulu;
 8 Department of Transportation Services for the City and County of
 9 Honolulu; Honolulu Neighborhood Commission; Hawaiian Electric;
 10 Kauai Island Utility Cooperative; Hawaiian Telcom; AT&T;
 11 T-Mobile; Verizon Communications; Charter Communications;
 12 Outdoor Circle; Sierra Club of Hawaii; Life of the Land; and
 13 representatives of small businesses; and

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 15 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Reference
 16 Bureau is requested to submit its report to the Legislature no
 17 later than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular
 18 Session of 2024; and

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 20 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
 21 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Director of the
 22 Legislative Reference Bureau; Public Utilities Commissioner;
 23 Director of Transportation; Adjutant General; Director of
 24 Business, Economic Development, and Tourism; Executive Director
 25 of Consumer Advocacy; Mayors of the Counties of Hawaii, Maui,
 26 Kauai, and the City and County of Honolulu; Director of the
 27 Department of Transportation Services for the City and County of
 28 Honolulu; Executive Secretary of the Honolulu Neighborhood
 29 Commission; President and Chief Executive Officer of Hawaiian
 30 Electric; Chairperson of the Kauai Island Utility Cooperative
 31 Board of Directors; President and General Manager of Hawaiian
 32 Telcom; President and Chief Operating Officer of AT&T; President
 33 and Chief Executive Officer of T-Mobile; Chairman and Chief
 34 Executive Officer of Verizon Communications; Chairman and Chief
 35 Executive Officer of Charter Communications; President of the
 36 Outdoor Circle Board of Directors; and Executive Director of
 37 Life of the Land.

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OFFERED BY: 

